7 August 1959

THRU

Submission of Current Support Memorandum

1. The attached Current Support Memorandum prepared by [redacted] is submitted herewith. 25X1

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A New Transporter Dock for Submarines at Shipyard No. 199, Komsomolsk

A new transporter dock* sighted on the Amur River on 17 October 1958 is a further indication that Shipyard no. 199, Komsomolsk plans to build exceptionally large submarines. The appearance of this dock coincides with the completion of a new submarine and the construction of two large, nuclear submarine projects at Komsomolsk.

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it is estimated that this dock can transport submarines up to 400 feet in length. A submarine of this size is larger than any submarine previously constructed in the USSR and is only 47 feet shorter than the largest US nuclear submarine, the USS Triton.

Before the appearance of the transporter dock, vessels constructed at Komsomolsk including W-class submarines and Kotlin/Kildin-class destroyers, with light drafts of 11 feet, were transported by pontoons. Pontoons were necessary because depths in the Amur River and the Tartar Strait are as shallow as 10.5 feet. The use of a transporter dock instead of pontoons indicates the delivery of ships of even greater draft. Therefore, the appearance of a large transporter dock is evidence that Komsomolsk is planning the construction and transport of exceptionally large submarines.

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* The three principal methods by which draft is reduced for deep draft vessels required to transit shallow water are transporter docks, pontoons and barges. A transporter dock is a specialized floating dock with a rounded and enclosed bow to improve towing qualities. A small superstructure is located in the bow. High side walls run from the bow to the stern, which is open.

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BACKGROUND

Production and Facilities

Since the end of World War II Shipyard No. 199, Komsomolsk has concerned itself primarily with the construction of a variety of naval vessels including W-class submarines, Skoryy class destroyers and Riga class DE's. The shipyard currently has under construction three or four new submarine types of which two are estimated to be large in size and nuclear propelled. In addition, the shipyard is constructing Kotlin/Kildin class destroyers.

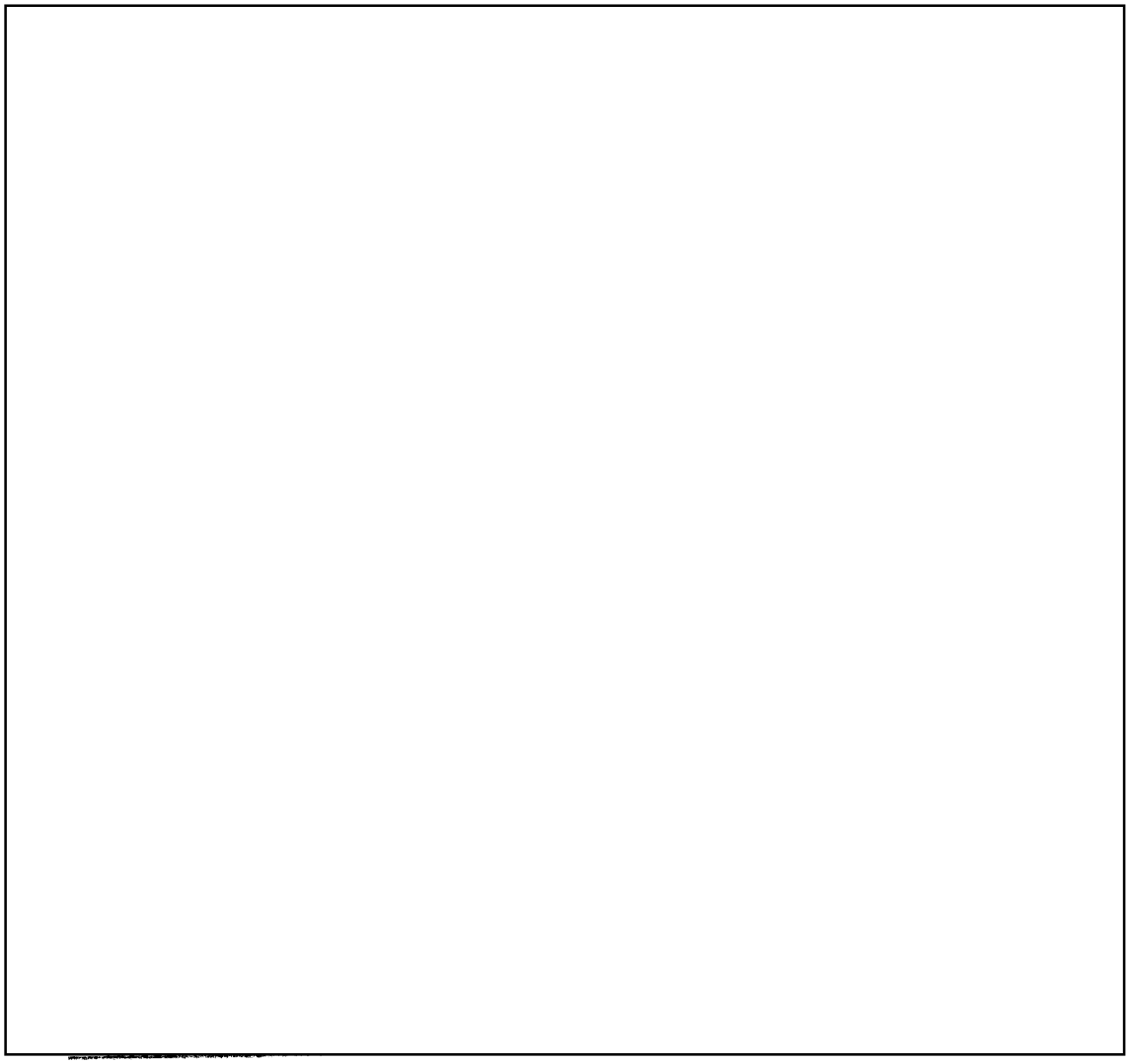
Yard facilities appear to have kept pace with the tempo of naval shipbuilding. By 1954 the yard had in operation four new covered building docks and numerous support facilities, which can be related directly to the new Kotlin/Kildin class destroyer and the W-class submarine building programs which were laid down about the same time as these facilities went into operation.

More recently, two large plate-bending rolls, new gantry cranes and new automatic welding equipment were added. This equipment appears to be related to the new submarine building program now in progress. The new transporter dock is the latest addition and it may well be a further indication of the planned construction of exceptionally large submarines at Komsomolsk.

Locational Problems

Komsomolsk is located 345 miles upstream from the mouth of the Amur River. Although this location provides a certain security, it also presents certain problems as a center of shipbuilding. Restrictive water depths in the Amur River and the Tartar Strait -- the shallowest depth encountered

in the Amur River is 10.5 feet 1/ and the Tartar Strait, although not probably as shallow as 10.5 feet is very shallow from the mouth of the Amur River to as far south as Mys Lazarevka — prohibit the movement of deep draft vessels such as large naval surface vessels and submarines and require the use of pontoons or transporter docks for reducing draft.* The W-class submarines and the Kotlin/Kildin class destroyers are the most recent classes at Komsomolsk to have been transported by pontoons. Also, in an effort to reduce draft as much as possible, a fitting out base for vessels has been established at Vladivostok. Figure 1 presents a map of the area in which pontoons or transporter docks are required.



* The use of floating equipment is not limited to Komsomolsk alone. Gorkiy built W-class submarines, for example, were delivered to Baku by transporter dock.

UTILIZATION OF THE NEW TRANSPORTER DOCK

Although in the USSR both pontoons and transporter docks are common methods of reducing draft, transporter docks are much more economical in transport cost than pontoons. Because of this, they are usually employed in place of pontoons where the transport distance exceeds 500 miles. In addition, transporter docks excel all other means of reducing draft where the required reduction is around 40 to 50 percent. 6/

Available evidence indicates that the new transporter dock is associated with Shipyard No. 199, Komsomolsk. The only other area of ship construction in the Far East that might require the use of a transporter dock is Khabarovsk. However, the size of this dock considerably exceeds any requirement of Khabarovsk. Nor can such a floating dock reasonably be construed to mean a repair dock. Adequate repair facilities for naval vessels are located at Vladivostok and Sovietskaya Gavan. More than adequate repair facilities for river vessels exist at Khabarovsk and adequate facilities are also available at Nikolaevsk. The use of the transporter dock is limited, therefore, to the movement of newly constructed vessels out of Komsomolsk.

The appearance of the transporter dock coincides with the appearance of the first new submarine of the current submarine construction program at Komsomolsk. Since the only other naval vessel besides submarines under construction at this shipyard is the Kotlin/Kildin class destroyer, which was delivered by pontoons, the transporter dock is believed to be almost certainly for the transport of submarines from Komsomolsk.

The size of the transporter dock indicates that Komsomolsk is constructing submarines of exceptionally large size. This assumption is further strengthened by the evidence of the construction of two large, nuclear submarine projects at Komsomolsk. From the internal dimensions of the dock, it is estimated that submarines up to 400 feet in length can be transported. A submarine 400 feet long and displacing 5000 tons is unusually large, and much larger than any submarine known to have been built in the USSR. A submarine of this size is only 47 feet shorter than the largest US built submarine, the nuclear USS Triton.

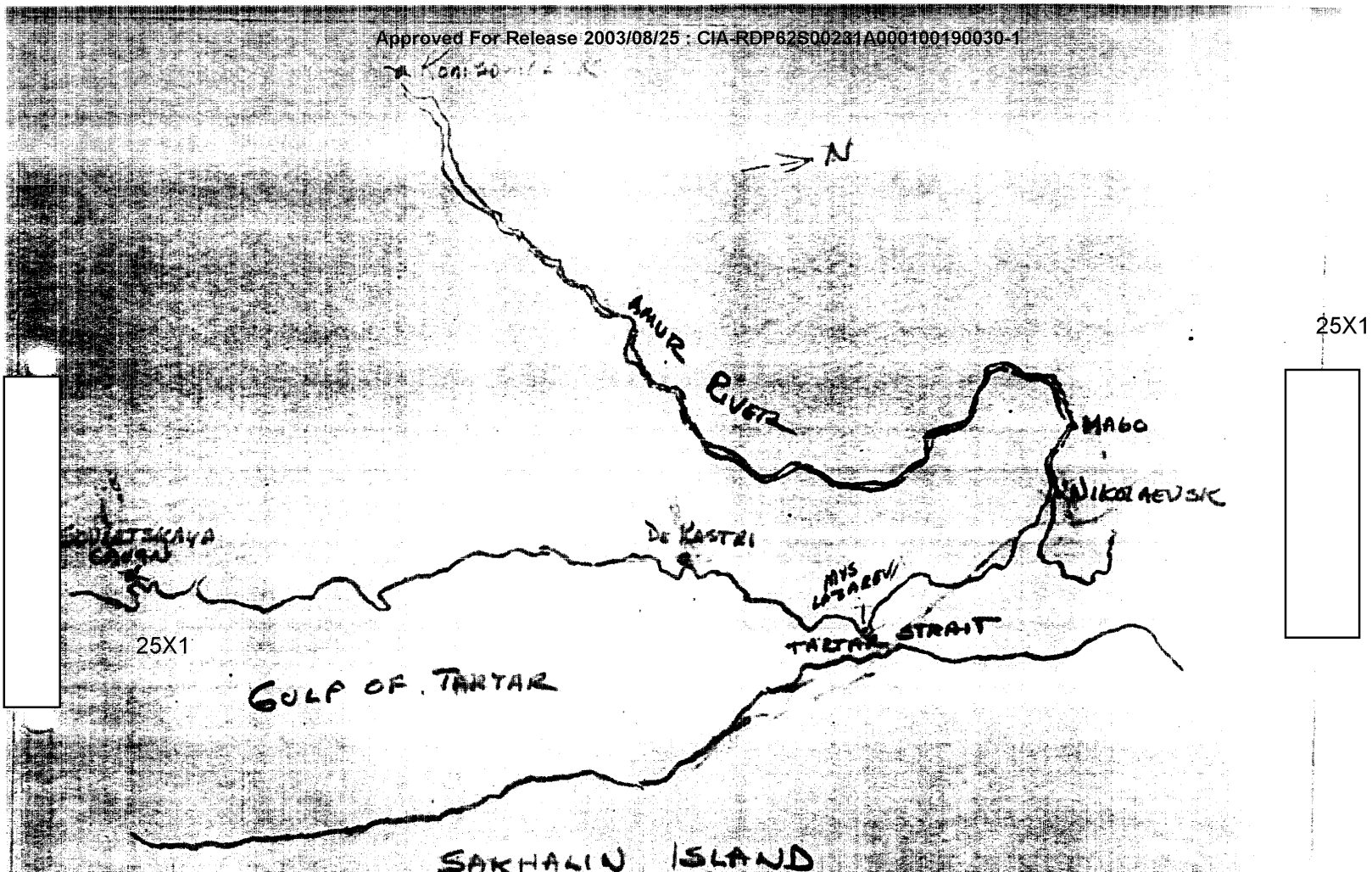


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FIGURE 1

ROUTE OF NEWLY CONSTR... FROM KOMSOMOL... VIA THE AMUR RIVER ... TARTAR STRAIT

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